1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
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302 hold this in one hand and work it very quickly, using neither water nor soap. Some use bits of broken glass when they can get them. Nowadays a few of the younger men have razors, which they use dry in the same manner. Body hair may be almost entirely absent or quite plentiful, with all intermediate conditions. An unusually hairy individual is shown in Pl. 78. Body hair is not depilated.

The features vary greatly, especially the nose. Besides the flat bridge and broad nostril of the Negroid type, there will not uncommonly be seen a nose with a high bridge and a pronounced profile. Some people have a peculiar curl of the nostrils which gives an almost Jewish appearance to the face. This was noticed by Guppy (1887, p. 216) and has been the subject of comment by many observers. The majority of people are only moderately prognathous, but extreme prognathism is sometimes seen, while a few are almost orthognathous. The lips are thick, but usually not everted as in the Negro.

In general these people are of medium height. The arms and legs are long in proportion to the length of the trunk. They are almost without exception spare of build, and usually very thin. I saw no men who could be described as stout, and only two or three women; these were stocky rather than actually fat. One girl with a tendency to plumpness was much teased by her companions, who called her 'Ponot'—'Fatty'. She seemed to take it in good part.

[164] The children are nearly all pot-bellied, owing to malarial enlargement of the spleen; the condition is temporarily exaggerated by a full meal. In both sexes the body musculature is well developed, but the extremities are thin, particularly the legs, which have often a stick-like appearance, due to poor development of the muscles of the calf. The hips are slender, this being particularly noticeable in the younger women, and the buttocks are often very prominent in both sexes. Both men and women have an erect carriage, and many are very graceful in their movements.

● 144 There is no appreciable amount of white blood in the veins of these natives up to the present time. The very few individuals who possess it, all of whom are known to everybody in the neighbourhood, are either mission teachers or store assistants, and have come, 144 with their wives, from other islands. The local natives definitely deprecate admixture. The men do not permit their women to go 186 as servants to the white settlers, as the women of other islands are

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accustomed to do, neither have the women, in so far as they discussed the subject with me, any desire to do so. They always remain at home when their husbands go away to work as indentured labourers, and apart from occasional visits to a plantation with loads of copra for sale, they come very little into contact with white people, so far as the area with which I am familiar is concerned. No case of Melanesian-White mixture was ever mentioned in our many discussions on parentage arising out of the collection of genealogies and other aspects of my investigation, and though I saw a Chinese half-breed child at a mission school in the centre of Buka, I believe this also to be exceptional.

LANGUAGE[1]

The dialects spoken on the island of Buka and on the north coast of Bougainville are all of Melanesian stock, with a Papuan element. There is very considerable difference in vocabulary in the different districts, sometimes varying from village to village.

The Petats dialect, spoken also on the neighbouring islands of Pororan and Hitau, has been reduced to writing by the Rev. A. H. Cropp, of the Methodist Mission. It differs somewhat from the dialects spoken on the mainland of Buka, which fall roughly into two groups, one comprising the west coast villages and one for those of the east coast. The dialect of the hill villages in the centre part of the island is different from either, but on the whole falls into line with the East Buka group. That of the cluster of tiny islands off the north-western corner of Bougainville, called collectively Saposa, has special sound changes not found elsewhere in this area, e.g. it alone of all the dialects studied possesses an *f* sound, which occurs in words whose cognates in other dialects have either *h* or *w* (as in Saposa *fāsu*, Petats *hāhu*, Kurtatchi *wāsu* = hair). When these have been allowed for, the Saposa dialect conforms to the general type. All these dialects are mutually intelligible.

On moving from Petats to Kurtatchi, I found there a dialect similar in construction, but, except for some words which are widespread throughout Melanesia, almost entirely different in

[1] The hitherto available material illustrating these dialects is now being studied by Mr. S. H. Ray, to whom I am indebted for confirming my grouping. I have given here only such details concerning the language as bear directly upon inter-communication among the natives, and are therefore relevant to the purpose of this book.